

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

What social class can meet
energy needs of billions?
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 75/NO. 13 APRIL 4, 2011

Capitalism's toll mounts for workers in Japan

BY CINDY JAQUITH

After a 9.0-magnitude earthquake and giant tsunami struck Japan March 11, the catastrophe facing workers and farmers is far-reaching. Nuclear contamination, homelessness, unemployment, and lack of power are widespread, while the government and capitalist rulers focus on protecting profits, not lives. All the while, needed information about the scope of the disaster is being hidden from working people.

The owners of the Fukushima nu-
Continued on page 7

For 5th week, Wisconsin rally takes on union busting

BY TONY LANE

MADISON, Wisconsin—For the fifth week in a row, workers and their supporters rallied here Saturday, March 19, with several thousand protesting antilabor legislation and cuts in programs working people depend on.

The legislation—which outlaws collective bargaining by public workers on anything beyond wages—was signed into law by Gov. Scott Walker March 11. Dane County Circuit Judge Maryann Sumi issued a temporary
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From Iowa to Egypt: workers reach out with the 'Militant'



Militant/Glova Scott

Militant supporter Ned Measel, right, selling paper at March 14 rally of teachers and other public employees in Annapolis, Maryland, against state government attacks on unions.

BY PAUL MAILHOT

Socialist workers across the United States and around the world are participating in labor solidarity actions and introducing workers and students to this working-class newspaper. "You guys have important stuff in this paper," is how one new subscriber responded after reading his first issue. Many are finding the *Militant* invaluable

as a source of information about union fights and world politics.

As they join many of these labor actions, supporters of the *Militant* are meeting other workers who are themselves traveling long distances to solidarity demonstrations. "We have seen we have to join other workers' struggles," said Buddy Howard, who
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Stop assault on Libya!

Washington, London, Paris launch air strikes



U.S. Navy/Mass Comm. Spc. 3rd Class Jonathan Sunderman

Guided missile destroyer USS Barry launches Tomahawk missile, one of some 160 cruise missiles fired from U.S. and British warships and submarines targeting sites in Libya.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Washington, London, and Paris unleashed widespread air strikes against Libya March 19.

During the first four days of the imperialist assault, more than 160 Tomahawk cruise missiles were fired from U.S. and British naval vessels in the Mediterranean, and more than 150 sorties were flown by U.S. Air Force B-2 stealth bombers, F-15 fighter jets, Marine Harrier jets, as well as French and British warplanes.

In an operation dubbed "Odyssey Dawn," missiles and planes have targeted Libyan antiaircraft and communications installations, government soldiers advancing on rebel-held cities in the eastern part of the country, and the compound in Tripoli of head of state Moammar Gadhafi.

The aggression comes a month after civil war erupted in Libya following protests to end Gadhafi's 41-year-old tyrannical regime. Washington and imperialist powers in Europe aim to reestablish stable capitalist rule and protect their investments and strategic interests in this oil-rich country and the surrounding region.

The revolt in Libya, spurred by uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, stems from popular resistance to suppression of basic democratic rights, including freedom of speech, press, and assembly, and the right to form political parties. Opposition forces initially took control of the main population centers in northeast Libya and some cities in the west before being driven back by the regime's superior air and
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Workers' stake in opposing attacks

There are big stakes for working people the world over in opposing the military assault on Libya by Washington, London, Paris, and other imperialist powers. These air strikes are being carried out in the interests

EDITORIAL

of the same U.S., British, French, and other capitalist ruling families that are seeking to bust our unions, imposing austerity measures to drive down our living standards, and slashing jobs and speeding up work to boost their profits.

The imperialist powers are the deadly enemy of working people in Libya, as they have been for more than a cen-

Continued on page 8

Contribute to int'l team at Tahrir Square Book Fair

There has been an enthusiastic response by readers of the *Militant* to the announcement of an international team of socialist workers headed to Cairo, Egypt, for the Tahrir Square Book Fair March 31–April 3. The socialists hail from the United States, Canada, France, Lebanon, and the United Kingdom.

In San Francisco, a participant in the Militant Labor Forum suggested passing the hat and \$125 was raised on the spot. A similar fund pitch at the New York Militant Labor Forum raised \$1,234. Thousands will be needed to cover travel, shipments, and subsidies for attractive discounts on Pathfinder books and subscriptions to the *Militant* in Egypt. To contribute, send a check made out to the *Militant*, 306 W 37th St. 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

—PAUL MAILHOT

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U.S.-funded ‘contractor’ tried, convicted in Cuba

BY DOUG NELSON

A Cuban court sentenced Alan Gross, a so-called international development worker from the United States, to 15 years in prison March 12 for “acts against the territorial independence or integrity of the state.”

Gross was distributing sophisticated satellite equipment in Cuba to selected individuals and groups as part of U.S. operations to create a covert, high-speed Internet network there.

Gross worked for Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI), a profit-based non-governmental organization operating in some 60 countries. The company worked under the U.S. State Department’s USAID program. Its stated purpose is “furthering America’s foreign policy interests in expanding democracy and free markets.”

DAI was USAID’s main contractor, having received more than \$2.7 billion between 2000 and just before Gross’s arrest in December 2009. But, as part of Washington’s efforts to revamp the image of its operations in Cuba, the company is no longer publicly connected to the State Department program.

DAI paid Gross more than \$500,000 for his work over a short period setting up connections for what the State Department called “marginalized groups” in Cuba. Gross says these were primarily Jewish social organizations.

The prosecution presented eyewitnesses as well as expert and documentary evidence proving Gross’s direct involvement in a “subversive project sponsored by the U.S. government to overthrow the Cuban Revolution using

communication and information systems not under the control of the state in order to promote destabilizing plans against different sectors of the Cuban population,” reported the Cuban paper *Juventud Rebelde*.

The sentence, lighter than the 20 years sought by prosecutors, was handed down by a five-judge panel of the Crimes against State Security Court. Gross may appeal to the Supreme People’s Tribunal, the country’s high court.

Cuba’s Internet bandwidth is relatively limited. The island is forced to use very expensive and slow satellite connections due to the U.S. economic embargo on the island, which blocks Cuba from using existing infrastructure available to other nations.

While denying requests to allow access to faster, cheaper Internet connections, the U.S. Treasury Department announced March 8 it would begin to allow the export of Internet-based communications and social networking services to Cuba, along with Iran and Sudan. The department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) made clear that

Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs Washington’s First Military Defeat in the Americas by Fidel Castro, José Ramón Fernández



In fewer than 72 hours of combat in April 1961, Cuba’s revolutionary armed forces defeated a U.S.-organized invasion by 1,500 mercenaries. In the process, the Cuban people set an example for workers, farmers, and youth the world over.

United States vs. The Cuban Five: A Judicial Coverup by Roldolfo Dávalos Fernández



Details the U.S. government’s frame-up of Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, René González, Fernando González, and Antonio Guerrero in a heavily biased Miami court on various trumped-up conspiracy charges.

\$22 each from PathfinderPress.com

the technology will be used to advance Washington’s efforts to undermine the governments in the three countries.

“The OFAC is well known for administering and enforcing trade sanctions based on U.S. foreign policy goals,” said an article from Cuba’s Foreign Ministry on the change. “Throughout history, U.S. administrations, both Democrats and Republicans, have pursued the common goal of toppling the Cuban Revolution and regaining control over their former properties in Cuba.”

The White House’s budget proposal for 2012 includes a 43 percent increase for the State Department’s Office of Cuban Affairs and a 34 percent increase in funds for the U.S. Interests Section

in Havana—the central spy nest for the financing and organization of counter-revolutionary activity in Cuba. The proposal also maintains the \$20 million budget for USAID’s operations in Cuba and includes \$30.5 million for anticommunist Radio and TV Martí broadcasts to the island.

Meanwhile, five Cuban revolutionaries remain imprisoned in the United States since 1998 with sentences ranging from 15 years to double life. The Cuban Five, as they are known, were framed up by the U.S. government on false “conspiracy” charges for monitoring the activities of counterrevolutionary groups in Miami with a history of armed assaults and acts of sabotage against Cuba.

White House blocks UN medical aid to Cuba

BY DOUG NELSON

The White House has moved to block UN funds from reaching Cuba for the treatment and prevention of AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

The move is an example of how Washington’s 50-year economic war on socialist Cuba not only remains in force, but is continually waged in new ways to

punish the workers and farmers of that country for ousting the U.S.-backed dictatorship and wresting political power from the capitalist exploiters.

In January the U.S. Treasury Department froze \$4.2 million allocated to Cuba under the UN Global Fund, a \$22 billion a year program that works to combat the three deadly pandemics in 150 countries.

The funds were to cover program expenses for January through March. UN officials in Havana told Spanish news agency EFE that the UN Development Program advanced \$2 million to keep the program in Cuba afloat for now.

This latest attack “adds to the already long list of examples of extraterritorial application of the economic, commercial, and financial embargo imposed by the Government of the United States of America against Cuba, this time, through the United Nations,” said a February letter from Cuban foreign minister Bruno Rodríguez to UN secretary-

general Ban Ki-moon.

“This mean-spirited policy,” the statement said, “aims to undermine the quality of service provided to the Cuban population and to obstruct the provision of medical assistance in over 100 countries by 40,000 Cuban health workers.”

Most of the funds are used to import expensive AIDS medication to Cuba, where antiretroviral treatment is provided free of charge to some 5,000 HIV patients. About 6,200 people are infected with HIV in Cuba, 3,500 of whom are considered in need of antiretroviral treatment, according to current World Health Organization guidelines.

Although the Caribbean is second only to sub-Saharan Africa in the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS, Cuba has among the lowest infection rates in the world—a rate one-sixth that of the United States. This achievement is made possible by a revolutionary workers government that, as a matter of course, gives priority to the well-being of the entire population.



Fight for rights of immigrants!

The U.S. rulers’ stepped-up attacks on immigrants are part and parcel of the bosses’ efforts to divide and weaken the fighting capacity of the working class as the crisis of the capitalist system deepens. Read about working-class resistance and solidarity in the ‘Militant.’



Militant/Alyson Kennedy
Students protest anti-immigrant bill at Indiana state capitol, March 10.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Public workers, students protest government cuts

Ohio public workers fight union busting

CINCINNATI—More than 3,500 public employees and their supporters gathered at Fountain Square here March 15 to stage a spirited rally against union-busting Senate Bill 5.

Teachers, transit workers, firefighters, social workers, and parks workers were joined by union building trades workers, auto workers, meat cutters, steelworkers, and others in a display of solidarity. College and high school students were also on hand as well as nonunion workers who came to show their support.

“I believe they’ve opened a can of worms they hadn’t expected,” said John Love, a member of Local 4372 of the United Steelworkers, who works at Bway Corporation. “A few months ago you couldn’t have got this many people out here. Now that they have attacked us we’re going to stand strong.”

The bill, introduced by Republican State Senator Shannon Jones, would limit collective bargaining for public employees to little more than wages. It also would limit how much Ohio’s governments can contribute to employees’ pensions and health benefits. The bill passed the Senate March 2 and is now on its way to the State House of Representatives. House Speaker William Batchelder said he plans to have the bill on the governor’s desk by early April. Gov. John Kasich backs the bill.

The rally in Cincinnati was one of 13 protests organized throughout the state that day to voice opposition to the bill.

Many of the participants in the rally were African American. A large number were members of Local 627 of the Amalgamated Transit Union who work as bus drivers for the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority. They had been without a contract for seven weeks. “We’re all fighting over collective bargaining,” said Local 627 member April Cruse. “The governor is trying to take that right away from us. We need to be able to bargain over more than just wages—take health care, for example.”

Another was Clarence McCoy, a 20-plus-year veteran packinghouse worker and member of Local 75 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union. He is also president of the Cincinnati chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

It is doubly important for Black work-

ers to be part of the fight, McCoy told the *Militant*. “The union has provided minorities a vehicle to fight for equal treatment. Prior to the unions you were at the mercy of your employer when it came to getting a wage increase or a promotion. The unions changed all that. In addition they helped raise the living standards of all workers. That’s what I’m out here defending today.”

—John Hawkins, a member of the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics, & Allied Workers Local 166, Chicago.

Students, teachers stand up against cuts in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA—A thousand teachers, students, unionists, and others joined a rally called by the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers at the school board office here March 14. They were protesting a \$1 billion cut in state funding to education proposed by Gov. Thomas Corbett in his new budget—almost \$300 million of which would come out of Philadelphia—and plans by the school board for additional attacks on teachers. These include the transformation of 18 schools into charters or “Promise Academies.”

The school board has announced that it will increase class sizes, stop buying new textbooks, cut athletics and art and music programs, reduce student transportation funds, and lay off teachers.

As part of the overhaul, all teachers at the 18 targeted schools would be fired and forced to reapply for jobs. The school day and school year would be lengthened. These proposals have been



Militant/John Studer

Students and teachers protest education cuts at March 14 rally in Philadelphia

met with a number of protests, both at the school board and at a number of the targeted schools, including Martin Luther King, West Philadelphia, Audenried, and Olney high schools.

The school board exiled popular Audenried teacher Hope Moffett out of the classroom and into an empty basement office, known as the “rub-

ber room.” Moffett was charged with speaking out against the proposed transformation of Audenried, aiding students in attending protests against it, and with releasing “confidential” school documents—the written order transferring her from the school.

At the rally Moffett was joined by
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Rally in Wisconsin takes stand for unions

Continued from front page
restraining order March 18 halting implementation of the law.

The noon rally was called by the International Association of Machinists District 10, which covers southeastern Wisconsin. Ricky Bartz from Machinists Local 1713 in Tomahawk had been there before with his wife, Tracy, a teacher. He said, “More people need to figure out what’s going on.”

Members of the Office and Professional Employees International Union joined the demonstration. Carloads came from Machinists Local 1916 at GE Healthcare in Milwaukee where CT, MRI, and X-ray machines are

produced. Iraq Veterans Against the War were also on hand. The rally coincided with the eighth anniversary of the start of the Iraq war.

Many other union signs were present. Bill Houseman, a member of Transit Workers Union Local 564, which organizes American Airlines workers at Los Angeles airport, told the *Militant*, “We’ve been working without a contract for three years. If they get away with this here, they will do it in the corporate field.”

Buddy Howard from the locked-out Roquette workers in Keokuk, Iowa, said he got a great response at the demonstration to a flyer he was passing out for a solidarity rally in Keokuk Saturday, March 26. Howard told the *Militant*, “With the company slamming the door in our face, we have seen we have to join other workers’ struggles. That’s what’s needed.” He noted, “Locked-out steelworkers from Metropolis, Illinois, are coming up to join our rally next week.”

Robert Artis marched with a contingent of a few dozen others who were from Allied Drive, a low-income and predominantly African American neighborhood in Madison. Many of their signs said, “No more cuts Walker!”

Artis said, “I’m here to support unions. Walker has the bull by the horns and is doing anything he wants unless we do something.”

A big focus of the recent demonstrations has been the call for the recall of Walker and of Republican state senators who support antiunion laws. Socialist workers participating in the Saturday action were involved in many discussions on continuing

to protest in the streets in defense of public workers, instead of electoral maneuvers against Republican politicians. Both the Democratic and the Republican parties have antilabor records.

Ken Maxwell, a retired teacher from Mount Horeb, said, “The Democrats don’t respond to strong union causes, they pussyfoot around, try to keep a ‘balance.’ And they keep the wars going.”

Colleen Johnston, a student at Smith College, questioned the value of the recall effort. “It will basically be taking six government officials out of office, but the government will keep doing the same thing,” she said.

Josh Garner, an organizer from Sheet Metal Workers Local 18 in Wisconsin, disagreed. “We need to recall politicians not friendly to our causes,” he said. “People in the streets” will, however, make politicians “work on our side.”

As the battle over the union-busting bill continues in the courts, the state government, local municipalities, and school boards are taking aim at workers along the lines of Governor Walker’s “budget repair bill.” The state announced it is freezing enrollment in one part of the state’s health-care plan, BadgerCare, and hiking premiums by almost 50 percent.

The Madison *State Journal* applauded the local school board for using “its new leverage” to limit teachers’ raises and force them to make higher contributions to pension and health-care plans.

Natalie Morrison and Laura Anderson contributed to this article.

—**MILITANT LABOR FORUMS**—

CALIFORNIA
San Francisco
From Wisconsin to Los Angeles. Today’s Union Fights: How We Got Here and the Solidarity We Must Keep Building. Fri., April 1, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

FLORIDA
Miami
Capitalism Is Responsible for Social Catastrophe in Japan. Speaker: Bernie Senter, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., April 3, 3 p.m. 719 NE 79th St. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

TEXAS
Houston
No Imperialist War against Libya. Speaker: Jacquie Henderson, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 2, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W 34th St., Suite C-51A. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.

WASHINGTON
Seattle
U.S. and Other Imperialists Hands Off Libya! Fri., April 1, 7:30 p.m. 5418 Rainer Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

CANADA
Montreal
Capitalist Disaster Devastates Japan. Speaker: Michel Dugré, Communist League. Fri., April 1, 8 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

AUSTRALIA
Sydney
50 Years of Socialist Revolution: Challenges Facing Cuba in Today’s World. Speaker: Ron Poulsen, Communist League. Sat. April 2, 6 p.m. Donation: \$4 waged, \$2 unwaged. 281-287 Beamish St. (upstairs), Campsie. Tel.: (02) 9718- 9698.

—**CALENDAR**—

CALIFORNIA
San Francisco
Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up? A film by Saul Landau. Also live music by the Cuban Cowboys. Sat., April 16, 7 p.m., Brava Theater. 2781 24th St. Tickets \$15. Sponsored by International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5. Tel.: (510) 219-0092.

Locked-out steelworkers: ‘People are waking up’

BY BETSY FARLEY

METROPOLIS, Illinois—“We didn’t start this fight, they brought it on us,” said Lucky Atkinson, one of 230 United Steelworkers (USW) members locked out here by Honeywell. “But when they start a fight, we’re not going to just lay down and stop.”

Atkinson joined USW Local 7-669 president Darrell Lillie, union safety committee representative Steve Glidden, and union members Marcalene Holt and Rick McConnell March 16 at the union hall to share their views on their fight and the spreading labor resistance to union-busting attacks across the Midwest.

Workers at the uranium-processing plant here have been fighting the lock-out since voting down the company’s union-busting “last, best, final offer” in June 2010. The bosses are demanding elimination of seniority and retiree medical benefits, along with pension cuts and a wage reduction of 10 percent over three years.

“We went to Madison, Wisconsin, February 26. We slept in the capitol and marched with people from a lot of the unions that have supported us and our fight,” said Lillie, a 20-year operator in the plant. “We felt this was the least we could do to pay them back and show solidarity.”

“Then last Thursday we went to Indianapolis to the state capitol with 70 of our members to back up the workers there,” Lillie continued. “And we’ve got a group heading to Keokuk, Iowa, on March 26 for the rally of the workers at Roquette who were locked out just three months after we were.”

Holt said that on April 25 the locked-out workers will also be going to the Honeywell annual shareholders meeting in Morristown, New Jersey.

“It’s no question our lives have changed in a big way these eight months,” said Atkinson. “I never thought I’d be traveling all over the country—to Wisconsin, to Iowa, to New Jersey.”

Just last week the union won a round



Locked-out steelworkers from Metropolis, Illinois, at rally against union busting in Madison, Wisconsin. “Even after we go back to work, I hope we keep on going to these rallies, keep on supporting other people, keep on fighting,” said steelworker Lucky Atkinson.

against the company. A federal court in Benton, Illinois, issued Honeywell an \$11.8 million fine and five years’ probation for knowingly storing hazardous waste without a permit, a violation workers in the plant have been trying to expose since 2002. The union also won the fight to have a union safety representative accompany inspectors from the Occupational Safety and Health

Administration in their upcoming investigation of the plant, Glidden noted.

“I’ve talked to a lot of older people who say they’ve never seen the labor movement like this before, not all over the country like this,” said Lillie. McConnell added, “There’s a lot of people waking up today.”

“I hope that we continue,” Atkinson said. “Even after we go back to work. I hope we keep on going to these rallies, keep on supporting other people, keep on fighting.”

Contributions can be sent to USW Local 7-669, PO Box 601, Metropolis, IL. 62960. E-mail: admin@usw7-669.com.

Workers extend reach of the ‘Militant’

Continued from front page

is part of a union fight in Keokuk, Iowa, and has traveled to Wisconsin several times to join up with other union fighters there.

The effort to reach out with the *Militant* and Pathfinder books will get another boost this week as a team of socialist workers heads to Cairo, Egypt, where they will participate in the Tahrir Square Book Fair. They will meet and talk to thousands of workers, students, and others who have been part of, and affected by, the big mobilizations that overthrew the hated Hosni Mubarak dictatorship.

Hot off the press for the book fair will be a new Arabic-language edition of *Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun* by Jack Barnes.

Since early February, when union protests began spreading from Madison, Wisconsin, some 500 subscriptions to the *Militant* have been sold. We will be reporting on this running total every week, along with sales of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, so keep the reports coming in.

Below distributors of the *Militant* relate their experiences.

DES MOINES, Iowa—Socialist workers here have been busy. On March 15 we took part in a union rally of 150 in front of the state capitol here to protest proposed legislation to weaken public workers unions and cut social services. We sold three subscriptions to the *Militant* and 10 single copies to public workers and others.

Early Saturday, March 19, a three-car caravan left for Madison, Wisconsin, to participate in the union rally there, joining socialists from other states. During the course of the day we sold 12 introductory subscriptions, three copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, and 75 single copies of the *Militant*.

We hit the road Sunday morning in a caravan to Ottumwa, Iowa, where union locals and the labor council had organized a rally of more than 300 in Central Park. Five workers got subscriptions and 16 bought single copies.

—Maggie Trowe

NASHVILLE, Tennessee—Supporters of the *Militant* from Atlanta traveled to a March 5 rally here of more than 3,000 to protest attempts to deny teachers their collective bargaining rights. Forty copies of the paper were snapped up in a steady rain. Eight unionists signed up for subscriptions. The headline about unionists in Wisconsin sticking together struck a chord.

One new subscriber, a member of the boilermakers union, said in a follow-up phone call that he read his whole first issue. He also wanted books advertised in the *Militant*.

Socialist workers from Atlanta and Miami teamed up in Tallahassee, Florida, March 8 selling three subscriptions and 47 single copies to 300 union demonstrators.

—Janice Lynn

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio—A *Militant* sales team from Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., traveled to this working-class town March 19—another state where the government is legislating to put the burden of the capitalist crisis onto working people.

“Unemployment is high around here,” explained an auto worker who has worked at the nearby Lordstown General Motors plant for 10 years. She was one of 16 workers to pick up a copy of the *Militant*.

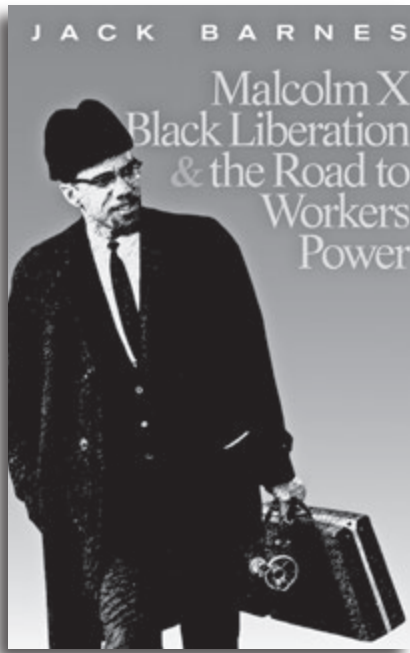
Asked about production in the plant and the “Now hiring” banner hanging from one of the plant gates, she responded, “They’re laying off.”

—Osborne Hart

LOS ANGELES—Leading up to the “March and Rally for Our Communities and Our Jobs” on March 26 here, supporters of the *Militant* have been expanding plant-gate sales. We sold 12 issues of the paper, and two introductory subscriptions, one renewal, and a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* to members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union at the union dispatch center.

—Arlene Rubinstein

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power by Jack Barnes



“This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States—from the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction to today—and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution. . . .”

Special offer: \$15
For the book and a 12-week
subscription to the *Militant*
(50 % off cover price of \$20)
Contact a distributor listed on page 5

Pathfinder Press

How FBI targeted teachers for firings in 1960s

Below is an excerpt from Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom by Nelson Blackstock, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. The book provides an in-depth look at the covert and illegal FBI counterintelligence program code-named Cointelpro. It targeted socialists, Black rights fighters, and anti-Vietnam War activists. Most of the FBI documents reproduced in the book were obtained through a lawsuit filed by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance in 1973 against spying, harassment, and disruption by the FBI and other federal cop agencies. The documents show not only the surreptitious methods of the secret police. In spite of the snitches' intent, the papers also provide pieces of the history of efforts to build the communist movement in the United States. Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY NELSON BLACKSTOCK

In 1968 the FBI took special pride in railroading Walter Elliot out of his hobby. As scoutmaster of Troop 339 in Orange, New Jersey, the FBI reasoned that he posed “a distinct threat to the goal of the scouting movement.”

Why? Walter Elliot was married to a socialist.

In the view of the bureau, this neces-



Pan-African News Wire/Abayomi Azikiwe

Chicago Teachers Union vice president Jesse Starkey addresses rally in Chicago Jan. 25, 2011, against FBI harassment of antiwar activists in Minnesota and Illinois. In 1960s and '70s, FBI through its Cointelpro operations sought to fire teachers opposed to government policies.

sitated a Cointelpro operation to counteract his “strong influence in shaping the minds of young boys.” The agent in charge of the effort called Elliot’s removal a “successful application of the disruption program for a worthy cause.”

The FBI sanctimoniously claims a special duty to “protect young minds.” Protect them, that is, from ideas unpopular with the FBI. Teachers prove an obvious target with their strategic “access” to “fertile young minds,” as one memo put it. . . .

Prominent in the ranks of teachers victimized by the FBI is Morris Starsky. In 1970 the FBI encouraged Starsky’s dismissal from his job as a professor of philosophy at Arizona State University. The Phoenix office of the FBI sent an anonymous letter slandering him to a faculty committee reviewing his teaching contract.

In a memo dated May 31, 1968, the Phoenix FBI noted that local targets for Cointelpro were “pretty obvious. . . . It is apparent that New Left organizations and activities in the Phoenix metropolitan area have received their inspiration and leadership almost exclusively from the members of the faculty in the Department of Philosophy at Arizona State University (ASU), chiefly Assistant Professor MORRIS J. STARKSKY.”

To that description of himself, Starsky adds that he helped organize the first antiwar teach-in at ASU; he led a campus free speech fight; he helped lead a successful campaign to win campus recog-

nition for SDS [Students for a Democratic Society]; he participated in campus activities to support striking Tucson sanitation workers and a union organizing drive by Chicano laundry workers; he served as a presidential elector for the Socialist Workers party in 1968; he helped to reestablish the ASU chapter of the American Federation of Teachers; and he was the faculty adviser of the Young Socialist Alliance [YSA] and the Student Mobilization Committee.

All that provoked quite a furor among right-wing state legislators and university regents. The Faculty Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure (whose members received the FBI’s slanderous letters) held a hundred hours of public hearings on whether Starsky was entitled to teach at ASU. Three thousand students and over 250 professors signed petitions supporting Starsky’s right to academic freedom.

The committee’s members were not duped by the FBI’s anonymous slanders, although they expressed surprise five years later when they learned that “A Concerned Alumnus” was really J. Edgar Hoover. The committee voted unanimously against dismissing Starsky. But the regents refused to renew his contract and he lost his job in June 1970. Starsky says that “it’s sort of like being found innocent and executed anyway.” Since ASU he has lost two teaching jobs in California for political reasons.

Starsky calls the FBI drive against him an attack on the rights of everyone.

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“What teacher is safe?” he asks. “What ideas would not subject a teacher to this kind of attack?—only U.S. government approved ideas.”

Starsky has spent the past five years fighting for his rights in and out of court. He has won one damage suit already. And an Arizona court ruled that the ASU action violated his civil rights. Meanwhile, the FBI refuses to turn over to Starsky some of its files on him on the grounds of “national security.”

“I’ve taught a couple of logic courses,” he says, “but I had a hard time figuring out how my seeing my own files would harm national security. After I read the Cointelpro documents it became clear: ‘national security’ means the FBI’s security from the nation finding out the vicious things it does in violation of people’s civil liberties.” . . .

In still another poison pen episode, the FBI tried in April 1969 to get Maude White (now Wilkinson) “separated from her employment” as a preschool teacher in Washington, D.C. The local FBI sent an anonymous letter signed “A Concerned Citizen,” purporting to be from Wilkinson’s neighbor, to the superintendent of the D.C. school system. The letter said that “Miss White has held weekly meetings of a socialist youth group” in her apartment.

After expounding upon the classical FBI distortions of the YSA as a group supporting “violent activities against established authority,” the letter continues, “I bring this information to your attention in order to protect the D.C. School System from the menace of a teacher who does not have the interests of the children or the country at heart.”

But it was precisely the interests of the children and the American people that led Wilkinson to become a socialist: “Being a teacher, especially in the D.C. schools, I saw how rotten the schools were, how much money was spent on war and how little on education,” she says.

Wilkinson’s files also document the three-way collusion between the FBI, the intelligence unit of the Washington police, and the school administration. According to an FBI memo, one local cop was delegated responsibility for conducting intelligence investigations within the D.C. school system at the direction of the assistant superintendent of schools in charge of personnel. Information on Wilkinson compiled by the D.C. police was forwarded to the FBI.

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What social class can meet energy needs of billions?

The following is an excerpt from “Our Politics Start with the World,” by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. It is based on a talk Barnes gave to a 2001 international socialist conference in Oberlin, Ohio. We are reprinting here the section that presents a working-class position on nuclear power, an issue under debate as dangerous radiation is released from nuclear reactors in Japan following the March 11 earthquake and tsunami. The full talk appears in issue 13 of New International, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. Copyright © 2005 by New International. Reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

Since the mid-1970s, the Socialist Workers Party has opposed the production and use of nuclear power in the United States. We’ve held this position because the owners of capital and their government are incapable, by the laws that drive their system, of placing human beings above profits in addressing the questions posed by the operation of nuclear power plants: the design and operation of nuclear reactor cores to prevent meltdowns, the manufacture and redundancy of secure containment vessels, and the disposal of radioactive and other toxic waste products.

But our position is political; it isn’t based on the half-life of an atom. Marxists start from the historically demonstrated capacity of human beings to transform nature, raise the productivity of social labor, and advance the accessibility of civilization and culture to more and more of the world’s toilers.

That’s the main thing that’s wrong with Fred Halstead’s argument in *What Working People Should Know about the Dangers of Nuclear Power*, a pamphlet we’ve used as part of our propaganda arsenal for more than twenty years. From the pamphlet’s very first sentence—“Nuclear power’s special danger to health, safety, and even life itself can be summed up in one word: *radiation*”—to its very last—“[W]e can end nuclear power’s threat to the very existence of the human race”—it approaches the safety issues posed by nuclear energy and radioactive wastes as immutable facts of nature, not as social and political questions that can be addressed and solved by the toilers. It does not start with where the development of nuclear power—and the questions of safety, health, and environmental degradation posed not only by it but also by alternative energy sources—fits along the line of march of workers and farmers toward the revolutionary struggle for national liberation and socialism on a world scale. It is in large part a valuable layman’s explanation—atomic diagrams and all—of the ABCs of nuclear physics: what’s an atom? what causes radiation? what’s the difference between fission and fusion? how do reactors work? and so on.

The point is not that much of the basic information in the pamphlet is necessarily wrong (although the virtual dismissal of the damaging health and environmental consequences of coal combustion, including the production

of carbon dioxide waste, is certainly mistaken). But the pamphlet avoids the central *political questions* the revolutionary workers movement needs to address. Nuclear power will continue to be developed. The question is what class will end up guiding this process and in whose interests.

The competition of capitals, the drive to maximize profits, spurs technological innovation under capitalism and will continue to do so for as long as this social system exists. At the same time, these same laws of capital accumulation press the employing class to subordinate (and often suppress) scientific and technological developments that would benefit competitors—and the producers—in order to maximize profits. In the process, capitalists display wanton disregard for the health and safety of workers and the broader population. Nor do they care one whit about the long-term or short-term consequences for the natural environment.

A testimony to the barbaric, anti-human character of capitalism is the reality that many of the greatest ad-

“Our position is political; it isn’t based on the half-life of an atom. Marxists start from the capacity of human beings to transform nature, raise the productivity of social labor, and advance the accessibility of civilization and culture to more and more of the world’s toilers . . .”

vances in science and technology, including nuclear power, are byproducts of the rulers’ preparations for war and mass slaughter. That’s been the case throughout the history of class society, in fact, but the consequences in the imperialist epoch genuinely threaten the existence of humanity. . . .

Given the unmet energy needs of billions across the globe, especially in semicolonial countries; the rising extraction and refining costs of the world’s oil resources; and accumulat-



Child in Japan is checked for radiation March 15, a few days after earthquake and tsunami struck, damaging Fukushima nuclear plant. “The question is how long will the design and construction of containment vessels, the monitoring of reactor operations, and disposal of atomic waste products . . . be carried out by governments beholden to the imperialist ruling families and other capitalist exploiters,” says Barnes.

ing and accelerating damage to the earth’s atmosphere from the burning of oil, coal, and other fossil fuels, nuclear reactors *will* be used to generate a growing percentage of the world’s electrical power in the twenty-first century. That’s for sure, and necessarily so. The question is how long

by workers and farmers governments acting in the interests of the great majority of humanity. The stakes in the resolution of that question—an outcome that will be settled in historic class battles—could not be clearer.

The dangers of nuclear power are not an argument against its potential benefits in advancing electrification of the world, but an argument *for* organizing the toilers to take power from the hands of the capitalist exploiters. The communist movement does not have “a position on nuclear power,” for or against. We have a proletarian internationalist course to advance the revolutionary struggle for national liberation and socialism. Along that road, vanguard workers in the imperialist countries make clear to the people of the semicolonial world that we reject the politics of our own ruling classes and support the extension of electrification to the billions around the earth who are forced to live and toil without it. We will fight to win the workers, farmers, and middle-class layers we can influence to understand and support this course as well.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 4, 1986

AUSTIN, Minn.—Striking meatpackers are calling on all supporters of their eight-month strike against the Geo. A. Hormel Co. to come to Austin for a national march and rally Saturday, April 12.

The company was able to reopen its plant January 21 when Minnesota Gov. Rudy Perpich sent the National Guard into Austin to herd scabs.

On March 20 strikers organized a picket line that shut down the plant for several hours. This was the first time that production was stopped at the plant since the Guard was sent. Hormel admits that the action cost the company \$300,000.

The call for action comes as the strikers—members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9—face stepped-up attacks not only by the company but by top officials of their international union.



April 3, 1961

This country is dangling on the brink of another war. American troops are poised on the borders of Laos awaiting orders from Washington which would send them into another Korean-type war.

Utilizing all the resources of press and television to create the ominous atmosphere of national emergency, President Kennedy delivered an ultimatum to the Soviet Union—an order that unless certain conditions were quickly met U.S. military force would be used.

The U.S. record in Laos stinks to high heaven. It includes violation of the 1954 Geneva Truce pact neutralizing that country, ruining its economy, subverting neutralist government to install a right-wing military dictatorship, and starting a civil war. All this was done to convert Laos into a military bastion for a war against China.



April 4, 1936

A three-day pitched battle between Mongolian and Manchukuo-Japanese forces in the Lake Bor region on the Outer Mongolian border brought the ever-latent Soviet-Japanese tension boiling once more to the surface this week.

Dispatches from Ulan Bator, the Mongol capital, to Moscow, described a battle in which tanks, planes, armored cars, and machine guns were brought into play. Several hundred men were engaged on both sides in the fight, which ended with the expulsion of the invading Manchukuo-Japanese troops. Moscow reports following the battle stated that additional Japanese reinforcements were being rushed to the battle area.

The Japanese-Manchukuo forces have provoked these border skirmishes by claiming for themselves territory which has always been recognized as being well within the Mongolian frontier.

Air strikes against Libya

Continued from front page
artillery power.

In mid-March, as Gadhafi's forces closed in on Benghazi—the opposition's political center in eastern Libya and last remaining stronghold—the governments of the United States, France, and the United Kingdom grabbed the chance to launch an assault. Gadhafi handed the Barack Obama administration a pretext to dress up the onslaught in “humanitarian” garb by demagogically warning Benghazi residents: “We will find you in your closets. We will have no mercy and no pity.”

Leaders of the Benghazi-based Transitional National Council welcomed the air campaign, which in its opening days slowed Gadhafi's offensive. The council, formed in early March, is led by members of Gadhafi's cabinet who resigned after the civil war began. Former justice minister Mustafa Abdel Jalil heads the council, and former interior minister Gen. Abdel Fattah Younes is a leading member. Paris has recognized the council as the official Libyan government.

A flotilla of warships is stationed in the Mediterranean off Libya's coast. Eleven each are under the command of Washington and Rome, and one each of the London, Ottawa, and Paris. The Italian government has provided seven air bases for strikes against Libya and Madrid offered two. Other imperialist powers joining the assault include the governments of Denmark and Belgium. They sent fighter jets to join British and French no-fly patrols.

On March 17 the UN Security Council with 10 votes in favor approved a resolution establishing the no-fly zone. Authorizing “all necessary measures to enforce compliance,” the UN resolution served as cover for air strikes that began two days later. The Russian and Chinese governments—both with power to veto resolutions—abstained, as did those of Germany, Brazil, and India.

Opening the door to imperialist aggression, the 22-member Arab League in an emergency meeting March 12 overwhelmingly called on the UN Security Council to impose a no-fly zone. Only Syria and Algeria dissented, according to Egyptian officials. Lebanon, the Security Council's only Arab League member, introduced the UN resolution a few days later. Despite this endorsement, only Qatar has so far committed forces to the imperialist-led operation, sending four warplanes.

The Arab League decision comes at a time when capitalist regimes in many of its member countries are facing rebellions by working people fighting for democratic and political rights.

Imperial allies and rivals

In announcing the assault on Libya, Obama said it would be “limited” in extent and duration and that command of the operation would shift to other governments “in a matter of days and not a matter of weeks.” Initial military operations have been directed by the U.S. Africa Command.

Rivalries emerged from the outset among the imperialist regimes, each of which is pursuing the class interests of its ruling families. The French government, looking to advance its own position as Europe's leading military and political power, opposes transferring command

to NATO. London and Rome—each eager to trim Paris's sails—support a NATO command, as does Washington, which dominates the military alliance.

“The relations grew so tense on Monday [March 21] that French and German ambassadors to NATO walked out of a meeting of the North Atlantic Council, the alliance's decision-making body,” reported the *Financial Times*, after NATO's secretary-general “criticised Paris for impeding NATO involvement and Germany for not actively participating.”

Cowed by the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, Gadhafi had worked to cultivate ties with Washington and other imperialist powers. He declared he would not produce nuclear weapons, handed over more than 4,000 centrifuges and other bomb-making technology, and began collaborating with U.S. spy agencies against alleged Islamist militants. U.S. and British oil companies returned to Libya. By 2008, the U.S. State Department began calling Gadhafi “a person of personality and experience.”

When the civil war erupted in Libya, there were divisions within both U.S. imperialist parties, the Democrats and Republicans, over whether to militarily intervene. Barack Obama's hesitant approach clashed more and more visibly with that of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and others. The rapid turning of the tide in favor of Gadhafi's forces in the civil war, however, led the White House to change course.

Toll mounts for working people in Japan

Continued from front page

clear plant deliberately delayed action to cool down reactors affected by the earthquake and tsunami because they wanted to protect their investments, the *Wall Street Journal* reported March 19. As of March 22 the danger of a complete meltdown at the site was subsiding, but vegetables, milk, and tap water in towns many miles from the plant were contaminated.

There are six reactors at the Fukushima site. The earthquake knocked the plant off the power grid, halting cooling of fuel rods. The tsunami that followed destroyed the plant's backup generator.

The fuel rods at the No. 1 reactor began to heat up right away. Executives of the Tokyo Electric Power Co. (Tepco), which operates the plant, rejected the idea of cooling it down with massive amounts of seawater. Tepco “hesitated because it tried to protect its assets,” said Akira Omoto, a member of the Japan Atomic Energy Commission.

While the company delayed, the rods got hotter and hotter, producing hydrogen gas, which exploded March 12 at 3:36 p.m. Prime Minister Naoto Kan at that time ordered seawater to be applied. The company began that operation at 8:20 p.m.

The cooling system failed at the No. 3 reactor March 13, the *Journal* reported. Tepco tried first to cool it with fresh water, but that failed. That afternoon the company began using seawater. An explosion hit the No. 3 reactor the morning of March 14, damaging the containment vessel and leaking radioactive particles into the atmosphere.

Meanwhile, the No. 2 reactor's cool-

ing system broke down. It suffered an explosion March 15.

It was not until March 16 that the Japanese army sent significant forces in to help with spraying seawater. By that time four of the reactors had been damaged and the other two were heating up.

Asked about the *Journal* story, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano said, “We did our best during the whole process, and we aren't at a stage where we can make any judgment on that.”

Now radioactive contamination has been found in produce in Tokyo, about 125 miles from the Fukushima site. The radioactive iodine level in spinach from the region is 27 times what is considered an acceptable amount. Fukushima milk contains radiation 17 times above the limit. Rain and dust are also affected, as is tap water.

The government has banned shipments of spinach from the four provinces near the plant, as well as milk from Fukushima Province. Japanese farmers

are demanding compensation from the government for their loss of sales.

Government spokesman Edano sought again to downplay the dangers of milk and produce contamination. “Even if you eat and drink them several times it will not be a health hazard,” he said.

But World Health Organization spokesman Peter Cordingley disagreed. “Quite clearly, it is not what we thought in the early stages. It is more serious,” he said. “We have seen Japanese people in grocery stores paying close attention to where their produce is coming from, and we think this is a wise practice.”

The overall toll of the earthquake and tsunami now stands at 7,197 dead and 19,000 missing. Five workers at the Fukushima plant have died, two are missing, and 22 are injured.

Some 400,000 Japanese remain homeless. Tens of thousands of factory workers are laid off. Rolling blackouts and fuel shortages still affect the whole country.

Protests widen for ouster of Yemeni dictator



Above is one of the almost daily demonstrations in Yemen demanding the ouster of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who has ruled since 1978. Washington has been a firm backer of Saleh and has been expanding its military role in the country as part its campaign against al-Qaeda forces throughout the region. One U.S. cruise missile attack in Yemen last year killed 40 civilians.

The dictator ordered troops and snipers to fire on a peaceful protest of tens of thousands in the capital Sanaa, March 18, killing 52 people. Saleh then imposed a state of emergency. On March 23 the commander of the army's 1st Armored Division, Maj. Gen. Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, joined the opposition along with at least 18 other top military officers.

—CINDY JAQUITH

Further reading from *New International Issue 13*

Our Politics Start with the World by Jack Barnes

“The owners of capital and their government are incapable, by the laws that drive their system, of placing human beings above profits in addressing the questions posed by the operation of nuclear power plants.”—\$14

Issue 14

Includes: ‘The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class’

Statement by Socialist Workers Party—\$14

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Stop air assault on Libya!

Continued from front page

ture. President Barack Obama claims the air strikes are necessary for “humanitarian” reasons. But that pretext is nothing but a bald-faced lie—made easier for the aggressors by Moammar Gadhafi’s threat to residents of Benghazi that his forces would “have no mercy and no pity” if they conquered that stronghold of opposition to his regime.

As they have done from the Balkans to the Middle East to Central Asia in recent decades, the imperialist governments are using their military might to bring to heel, and if possible to topple, a regime that no longer serves their class interests. Washington and its partners looked on for weeks as Gadhafi’s armed forces and hired mercenaries pummeled working people across Libya who had rebelled against his dictatorial rule. As the regime’s troops were on the verge of entering Benghazi—once enough blood had been spilled to make intervention more palatable to bourgeois public opinion worldwide—the imperialist powers struck.

All the posturing by Washington, London, and Paris as “saviors” of the Libyan people, however, cannot obscure what they are really after. Each of the participating capitalist governments seeks to stabilize the situation in that oil-rich country and region in order to strengthen its strategic interests and keep on raking in profits from the exploitation of workers and other toilers there. The imperialist rulers need a regime in Libya—or in part of it—that is more beholden to them.

At the same time, the competing economic and po-

litical interests among the intervening capitalist powers, and the tensions these rivalries produce, have come to the fore since the outset of “Operation Odyssey Dawn.” But “saving” working people in Libya from the brutality of the Gadhafi regime counts for nothing in these conflicts.

The fight by working people and others in Libya to topple the Gadhafi regime gained momentum earlier this year in the wake of mobilizations in Tunisia and then Egypt to end long-standing dictatorships in those countries. The ongoing rebellions across northern Africa and the Middle East are a response to intolerable conditions confronting working people in face of today’s global capitalist crisis. Millions of workers, peasants, and youth are fed up with the suppression of basic democratic freedoms that make it harder for them to organize—on the land, in the factories, and in the streets—to defend themselves and form their own unions and political organizations.

Working people in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and the world over have common class interests with our brothers and sisters in Libya in opposing the imperialist military assault. What’s more, the soldiers and sailors deployed by the wealthy rulers in Washington, London, and Paris are workers and farmers in their big majority—not the sons and daughters of those who send them into harm’s way.

Working people the world over should demand: “Stop the air strikes! Hands off Libya!”

LETTERS

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I just received a notice that I have 2 issues remaining before my sub runs out. This will get to you late due to institutional procedures. Yet you should still find here a check for \$12 to cover the cost for another full-year subscription at the prisoners’ discount.

*A prisoner
Florida*

Solidarity

I am a student at University of Minnesota Morris. I would contribute if I could. Keep up the good work. Solidarity forever!
J.T.

Morris, Minnesota

‘Family farmer’ term

The article in the March 7 *Militant* on demonstrations in Wisconsin reported “family farmers”

were among those participating. I think use of this term is problematic for the workers movement. Farmers work the land, just as they form their political opinions, as individuals who assume all the responsibilities of production. Household members, if they exist, can and sometimes do provide direct but more often indirect support. Of course, the material fate of the household is directly tied to the economic fortunes of the

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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farm. I think the term persists as an ideal in bourgeois society to help maintain and reinforce the domestic slavery of women.

Simply saying there were farmers who came out to support the workers’ struggles is enough to understand the significance.

*Karl Butts
Plant City, Florida*

Appreciates paper

Thanks for publishing on the needs of workers and the poor.
M.R.

Hamden, Connecticut

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Protest against cuts

Continued from page 3

a group of students from Audenried, many wearing homemade T-shirts supporting her. “Free Hope,” one read. Moffett told the *Militant* that she was proud of the way her students took part in the demonstrations and was fighting to get back into her classroom.

On March 21 Moffett was returned to teaching at Audenried after court-ordered arbitration with district officials.

—John Studer

Iowa: ‘We Are One’ rally defends public workers

OTTUMWA, Iowa—Some 350 people joined a “We Are One” rally here March 20 endorsed by 20 local unions and sponsored by the Southern Iowa Labor Council, AFL-CIO. This town of 25,000 is home to a large Cargill meatpacking plant of 2,400 workers organized by United Food and Commercial Workers Local 230 and a John Deere plant organized by United Automobile Workers (UAW) Local 74.

Miriam Kenning of the Ottumwa Education Association told the demonstrators that Iowa’s collective bargaining laws were enacted following a wave of teachers’ strikes in the early 1970s. Now public workers are under attack in the midst of state budget crises and lawmakers are trying to drastically restrict union rights workers have fought for and won.

A number of young meatpackers from Local 230 were at the rally. Brooke Billings told the *Militant*, “We have to help to support everyone.” Erica Billings added, “We want our voices heard.”

Paul Durban, a member of UAW Local 74 who has worked at John Deere for 10 years, brought his family to the protest. He told the *Militant*, “We need to rally against the taking away of our rights to collective bargaining. I have everything I own because of our union.”

Todd Miller, representing Local 48G of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union, invited rally participants to join his local in a demonstration in Keokuk, Iowa, March 26. The unionists have been locked out by Roquette America for more than six months. Steve Siegel, president of the Southern Iowa Labor Federation, announced that the AFL-CIO has called for solidarity actions across the country on April 4. The action in Iowa will be in Des Moines.

—Helen Meyers

Nurses rally in Boston, demand ‘Safe Staffing Now’

BOSTON— Chanting “Safe Staffing Now!” more than 200 nurses held a picket line here March 16 and passed out leaflets in English and Chinese to bring their case to the public.

The nurses work at Tufts Medical Center (TMC) and are members of the Massachusetts Nurses Association, affiliated with National Nurses United. Since their contract with TMC expired in December, they have been working under a three-month extension.

Donna Ruffner, who has worked at TMC as a nurse for 30 years, explained: “The hospital is trying to give us more patients. Research shows more patients per nurse leads to more infections, more mortality. They’re also trying to get rid of older nurses, who are at the top of the pay scale; they want newer ones, at lower pay.”

Forced overtime is another important issue. “I work a 12-hour night shift, and at times they’re mandating us to stay another four hours. That’s how they’re filling the holes,” said Sherry Sutherland, a nurse with 21 years at the hospital. “You cannot give safe care when you haven’t had enough sleep.” The nurses are seeking contractually-guaranteed staffing levels, which would be adjusted based on the patient’s level of sickness, as well as prohibitions against forced overtime, and the “floating” of nurses from one specialized area to another where they might not be competent.

The day before, there was a protest outside WGBH, the public broadcaster whose 280 production workers, editors, writers and others had voted down a concession contract by 188-15. Despite the request to continue negotiations by their union, the Association of Employees of the Educational Foundation, Communications Workers of America Local 1300, management imposed the contract the next day.

—Sarah Ullman

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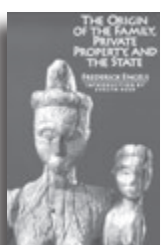
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